

IN SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

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MAY 14, 1836.

Read, and ordered to be printed.

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Mr. SOUTHARD made the following

REPORT,

WITH SENATE BILL NO. 262.

*The Naval Committee, to whom were referred the resolutions of sundry officers of the navy, in relation to a naval school, make report :*

The subject to which the attention of the committee has been directed by these resolutions is not new to them. In discharge of the duties assigned by the Senate, they have anxiously deliberated upon it, and before the reference which calls for this report, they had resolved to present it to the consideration of the Senate, and directed their chairman to report a bill for the establishment of a naval school.

In coming to this decision, the committee take leave to refer to the course of others who have preceded them in their action upon this interesting subject.

Upon the earnest recommendation of the Executive, provision was proposed by the Senate for the establishment of a naval school, in the bill for the gradual improvement of the navy, which was approved on the 3d March, 1827, but was lost by a very small majority. At the last session of the Senate, a bill was introduced for this object, and subsequently reported by the committee, but was not finally acted upon. In again presenting it to the Senate, the committee are influenced by a strong and decided conviction of its indispensable necessity to the public interests, and to the honor, usefulness, and efficiency of the navy.

The sense entertained and expressed by the officers whose resolutions were referred, of the value of education to naval officers, and the impossibility of their obtaining it under the present system, meet the entire approbation of the committee, and they refer the Senate to them as expressing sentiments and opinions worthy of respectful regard.

The nature and situation of the naval service exhibit strongly the necessity for the proposed measure.

Our navy visits every land and every ocean. It protects a commerce at this moment as *valuable* as that of any other nation, though less than one other in amount of men and tonnage—scattered over the whole habitable globe, and exposed to dangers of every possible description. In the protection of this commerce, our naval officers are often brought in

contact with the Governments and official agents of every civilized nation, and are often obliged to have intercourse with them upon subjects which can only be properly treated by well-educated and well-informed men. They are, indeed, our national representatives in all other countries, and from them, much of the estimate of us as to our manners, intelligence, and character as a nation must be drawn. It is not possible that their duties can be performed in the manner in which we should desire them to be performed, without science, intelligence, and knowledge. Besides, we are a growing nation, and it is our interest and duty to draw from every other region, every species of knowledge which can be useful to us. This can be more effectually and usefully accomplished by this, than by any other class of our citizens. But how can all these be accomplished by them without proper practical and useful education?—and when are they to receive this education? They are appointed when mere boys, generally between the ages of 14 and 17, when it is not possible that they should be well-informed and disciplined scholars. Their situation and duties in the service render it equally impossible that they should make extensive literary and scientific acquirements beyond the mere practical duties of the seaman. They have not pay enough at that period of their service to purchase the means of instruction, nor time enough to acquire it; their employments are too active and steady.

The only mode by which it can be secured, is by the establishment of a school which shall combine literary and scientific instruction with practical performance of a portion of their duties; and this may be accomplished by competent teachers, and by connecting with the school one or more small vessels in which they may be compelled, under proper guidance, to perform in turn all the services of the common sailor, with those, also, which belong to office and command.

The expense of such an establishment need not be large; with it we may dispense with the present inefficient and almost useless system of instruction on board our cruising vessels, and the money expended upon it would go far towards supplying the means necessary for the support of a school.

So many considerations enter into the selection of a place for a naval school, and it is so properly the duty of the Executive, that the committee have thought it proper to leave the selection to the Executive.

They report a bill.